

A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED by the

D E A T H

Of the REVEREND

Mr. *Hugh Scot.*

PREACHED AT

N E W T O W N,

The Fourth of *April*, 1736.

By JAMES DUCHAL, M. A.

B E L F A S T :

Printed by JOHN POTTS, SAMUEL WILSON,
and JAMES MAGEE. M, DCC, XXXVI

SERMON

Occasioned by the

DEATH

of the Reverend

Mr. Hugh Jones



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The Fourth of April, 1736.

By JAMES DUCHAL, M. A.

ELLIPSIS

Printed by John Potts, Samuel Wilson,
and James Mather, M. D. 1736.

A

SERMON, &c.

I JOHN III. 2.

Beloved now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

THIS Chapter begins with an Exclamation, setting forth the Favour and Love of God to us, by which we are adopted as his Children. A Love indeed astonishing and worthy of God. It now fills believing Minds with Wonder and Joy: but surely their Sense of it will be much more affecting, when they see and possess, what they must now be contented to believe and hope. At present their State does not, to the World, appear to be at all distinguished, with respect to Happiness, above that of other Men: Sometimes 'tis quite otherwise, and a severe Discipline is appointed for them. Yet now are they the

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Sons of God, however deprest their Circumstances, whatever their Sufferings be. And they shall one Day shine in the Glory that becomes them as such. A Glory that it was not intended to manifest, in this World: 'tis reserved for them till the Day of CHRIST's Appearance. *When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

IT doth not yet appear what we shall be. It is not known to the World, nor even to ourselves. The Stages of Futurity that lie beyond the Grave, are in a great Measure veiled from us. We know not what we shall be in a State of Separation from the Body. We have no Access to the *World of Spirits*. No Opportunity of conversing with the Inhabitants of it. Reason teaches but little concerning it. And the *Holy Scriptures* do not descend to a particular Explanation. Perhaps we are not capable of understanding a particular and exact Description. We have not Ideas of this sort nor the Means of receiving them. So we read 2 Cor. xii. 4. that when the Apostle Paul was caught up to Paradise, he heard Words that it was not lawful, or (which is more probably the Meaning of the Word in this Place) *not possible for a Man to utter*. When we attempt to gratify our Minds in their curious Enquiries into the Circumstances of that State, and the Manner of our Existence in it; we find ourselves immediately bewildered in Conjecture. And tho' probable Conjectures may be edifying as well as curious, yet they do not satisfy.

How little do we know concerning the Powers of the Spirit in a separate State? How it shall see or hear? How it shall converse and move from Place to Place? What new Faculties spring up in it that shall answer to the Use of the bodily Organs? How little do we know of its Place? How little of
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its Exercises ? Whether it is acquainted with, or how affected by, any thing that passes in this World ? Whether when it leaves the Body, the Mind is wholly stript of Matter ; or whether as some think, there will be still a subtil material Lodging, in which it shall dwell, and which it shall use as a Vehicle ? What Objects may be discovered, that lie, at present, altogether concealed ; as Colours from Persons born blind, and Music from the Deaf ? What Views it will have of those Objects that are now too great for our Comprehension ? These things are all *Mystery*.

How little do we know, again, of the Particulars of the *Resurrection* ? What Form the raised Body will be of ? Whether it will retain those Powers and Organs that seem to be adapted, purely, to our present State ? Whether it will have any new Powers added ? What World we shall inhabit ? What Work we shall have ? Where Heav'n is, and the glorious Throne of God ? How his Glory there appears ? What would one not give, to have all these Questions, and others that might be put, answered to our Satisfaction ? But God has not thought fit to do it : And this to pious and humble Minds is enough to quell the Impatience of Curiosity, and make them easy. Perhaps there is not an Instance in which *Divine Sovereignty*, in the Government of Mankind, does more show itself than this. As we came into this World, so *at God's Command* we must remove into the World of Spirits, there for ever to dwell. We have no Access to it before our removal to take a View of it, to converse with the Inhabitants, or to learn their state and manner of Existence. We are to depend wholly upon the general Intimations God has giv'n us by the *Light of Nature*, and in the *Holy Scriptures* ; submitting all
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Particulars to his Authority, and resting upon his Goodness.

BUT as this Sovereignty does of right belong to, and well becomes the Supreme Mind ; so when it's considered as in necessary Conjunction with *infinite Wisdom and Goodness*, our Dependance upon it, tho' absolute, will give no Uneasiness. It does not indeed appear what we shall be, we know not the Particulars of our future State and Lot : but know that if we are capable of the Blessings infinite Goodness is prepar'd to bestow, we shall be very happy. For this we do not rely, only, upon the Goodness of God as made manifest by *Reason and Nature*, but as *Christians*, have his *express Promise*. A Promise ratified by the Death and Resurrection of our *Saviour*, and with which we ought to be fully satisfied. Upon this we are to hazard our most important Interests, and our doing so is an Homage infinitely due to our Great Lord. 'Tis what his Greatness, Grace, and Veracity most justly demand. Thus, the absolute Sovereignty of God ceases to be terrible ; and Dependance becomes our Choice, as well as Duty.

BUT, tho' it does not yet appear what we shall be, the Apostle has giv'n us a most material Hint, and full of Comfort, to direct our Thoughts concerning the Nature of that Happiness, which is reserved for us. *We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* To be like God, is the highest Happiness we are capable of. *When he shall appear ;* These Words may be otherwise rendered, *when it shall appear.* That is, *when it shall appear, or be manifested, what we shall be :* Referring to the Time when the Glory reserved for the Sons of God shall be fully revealed. This

no doubt is at the Day of *Christ's* Appearance. And so whether we understand the Words thus, or as our Translators have render'd them, it makes no Variation as to the Time, nor indeed as to the Subject spoken of. And if the Words be understood to signify the Appearance of a Person to whom, it is said, we shall be like; it is of no Moment whether we understand it as referring to God who is mention'd in the beginning of the Verse, or as many Expositors think, to the *Son of God*, who is the Person that shall visibly appear at the Last Day. These Expositors imagine that the Son may be intended tho' not mentioned; as in *ver. 5.* where the Person spoken of must be the Son, tho' he is not named in any of the Verses preceeding. It is no matter, I say, to the present Argument, whether we refer it to the Father or the Son: For in being like to the Father we are like the Son, in being like the Son we are like the Father. *The one is the Brightness of the other's Glory and the express Image of his Person.*

BUT let us consider how great a Thing it is to be *like God*. Surely every believing Mind must exult at the Thought. There are many Expressions in Scripture that *labour*, in representing the future Happiness of the Righteous. But none of them can more elevate our Sentiments of it than this. What can be imagin'd higher? How adorable the Grace that speaks to us in this Strain, that allows us to hope such Honour and Bliss!

To the Question, *wherein this Likeness consists?* A full Answer is not to be expected, till Experience gives it. Our present Language and Thoughts, fall, undoubtedly, much below the Dignity of the Subject. But I shall in the remaining Part of this Discourse, suggest such Things, as tho', they do not
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amount to a particular Explication ; yet may be serviceable, in the strengthening our Desires after, and quickning our Course to that high Advancement.

○ If we take the Appearance here spoken of to mean the Appearance of our Lord, who will come in the Name and Glory of the Father to judge the World : We must, then, consider the Sons of God as raised from their Graves, and bearing the Image of their Saviour, in the Form and Aspect of their Bodies, as well as in the Powers and Temper of their Minds. Tho' we know little of the Structure, Composition, and Qualities of the raised Body ; yet we know it will be like the Body of Christ. So the Apostle Paul has taught us, *Phil. iii. 21. Who shall change our vile Bodies, that they may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able, even, to subdue all things unto himself.* And this is farther explain'd, *1 Cor. xv. 35, — 44. But some Man will say, how are the Dead raised up, and with what Body do they come ? Thou Fool, that which thou sowest is not quickned except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that Body that shall be ; but bare Grain, it may chance of Wheat, or of some other Grain. But God giveth it a Body as it hath pleased him, and to every Seed his own Body. All Flesh is not the same Flesh : but there is one kind of Flesh of Men, another of Beasts, another of Fishes, and another of Birds. There are also celestial Bodies, and Bodies terrestrial : but the Glory of the celestial is one, and the Glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one Glory of the Sun, another Glory of the Moon, and another Glory of the Stars ; for one Star differeth from another Star, in Glory. So also is the Resurrection of the Dead. It is sown in Corruption, it is raised in Incorruption : it is sown in Dishonour,*

Dis honour, it is raised in Glory : it is sown in Weakness, it is raised in Power : it is sown a natural Body, it is raised a spiritual Body. From these Expressions, it is plain, that the Body after the Resurrection, will be very different from what it is now. It will be a *spiritual Body*, that is, admirably refin'd, having nothing in it gross and impure, or that tends to Corruption. *Material* it must be, but that Matter may be in small Quantity and wondrously rarified. It will be a *glorious Body*, probably have some external Lustre cast upon it, that shall be very beautiful and pleasing to the Eye. So it is sown a *natural*, and raised a *spiritual Body*, sown in *Corruption*, raised in *Incorruption*, sown in *Dis honour*, raised in *Glory*. And indeed if the Body did not undergo great Changes at the Resurrection, a wise Man would never desire to see it. But 'tis pleasing to think that by the Power of God, these known Lodgings of our Minds shall be so refitted, that our returning to the Possession of them, will increase our Happiness. For so, the Matter is always represented in Scripture. It will be pleasing to inhabit a Body, so beautiful in its Appearance, so exact in all its Frame as that no doubt will be. A Body most spiritul and active, healthful and vigorous, free from every thing gross and unwieldy, from Sickness and Pain, Decay and grey Hairs. A Body that will never clogg or obstruct the Mind in its noblest Operations; but prove a fit Instrument for them, and always in tune. *Welcome* the Flesh, if it is in such a Form; never to be desired if it is not.

BUT indeed what has been hitherto said, is of small Moment, when compar'd with the Perfection and Glory of *Mind*. The Mind is the Seat of Happiness. And as it might have been pleased and happy (if God had so appointed) without any Resur-

rection of the Flesh at all. So if *it* were not happy, all the Splendors that would be cast upon the Body, would signify nothing. It is being like God in our intellectual Powers and Temper, that's the great Thing.

It is manifest that there are some Attributes of the *Divine Being*, of which Creatures the most exalted can bear no sort of Resemblance. Such are *absolute Eternity, necessary Existence, Independence, Immensity, &c.* which are *incommunicable*. But there are other Perfections, the Imitation of which we are instructed to endeavour, and in the Resemblance of which, our highest Felicity must consist. These are summ'd up by this *Apostle* in two abstract Epithets, which are indeed very glorious, viz. *God is Light, and God is Love*. In Light and Love his Children bear his Image. An Image that must fall infinitely short of the glorious Pattern. For there is but one Person that is *the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person*. Yet however faint the Resemblance may be, when compar'd to absolute Perfection; it is their Glory and Happiness, the greatest of which they are capable.

THEY that are acquainted with the sacred Style, know, that the Term *Light*, is used not only, to signify Knowledge and Wisdom, but *Purity and Righteousness*. As *Darkness*, on the contrary is used to express all kinds of *Immorality*. These Phrases, taken in this Sense, do so frequently occur in the Holy Scriptures, that it is not necessary to name any particular Texts. And 'tis a way of speaking that's very proper. For all Wickedness is originally owing, in a great Measure, to Incogitancy, or to Prejudices that darken the Mind, and corrupt the Affections. As on t'other hand a just way of thinking, and judging, must be attended with the Love
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and Practice of Virtue. While God, therefore, is said to be *Light*, it means the perfect Purity of his Nature, as well as perfect Wisdom and Knowledge. And God is *Love*, a Being perfectly, and unchangeably *good and benevolent*. His Image therefore in his Servants may be conceived to consist, principally, in *Purity, Knowledge, and Love*.

GOD is a Being infinitely *pure and holy*; incapable of any moral Stain; of any thing unworthy of his own Nature. In this respect good Men bear his Image, in some measure, in this Life. *They are purified from the Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit. Renewed in the Spirits of their Minds. Turned from Darkness unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God. They have put off the Old Man with his Lusts. And are created again unto good Works.* Yet in the present State their Purity is not perfect. There are Remains of irregular Affections and Dispositions. And they must be wonderfully advanced indeed, in Virtue and religious Obedience, that know no Insurrections of Appetite and Desire, against Reason and Conscience; no Irregularities of Imagination or Passion. Where is such a Character to be found? Will it not always, in this Life, hold true, that in many things *we offend all*? But the *Children of Wisdom* are allowed to hope, for perfect Holiness in the World to come. That all the Affections shall be pure and regular. That nothing shall be done, nothing said, nothing thought or imagined, unworthy of Reason, and that will not stand the strictest Scrutiny of Conscience. This seems to be fundamental to *human Felicity*. So far as any *moral Agent* is guilty, so far he must be wretched. Wretched from himself, tho' there were no other Power to be apprehended, no other Judge but his own Conscience. If the Servants of the Redeemer were imperfect in

point of *Morality*, they must be so in *Happiness*. But how pleasing must it be, to enjoy unspotted Innocence, and the Tranquility that springs from it ! How pleasing to think, that to Eternity we shall never err in our Counsels, or Actions ; never be guilty of any culpable Negligence, any Transgression ! Ingenuous Minds find nothing so painful to them, as their moral Infirmities ; and that State must be *Heav'n*, where these shall disquiet them no more. This, I say, is fundamental to the Happiness of such a Being as Man. *For without it, he cannot be thoroughly pleased with himself, and so can have no perfect Fruition of any thing. With it he has the Approbation of his own Heart, and so is prepar'd to act with Freedom and Ease ; and to enjoy the Pleasures of Existence, in their most delightful and satisfying Relishes.*

THE second thing mention'd in which this Resemblance may be suppos'd to consist, is *Knowledge*. Christians are said to be *renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of God*. In that Knowledge principally which is of the *moral* and therefore of the most useful Kind. Altho' no sort of it, that can any way contribute to the Perfection and Happiness of human Nature, is to be excluded. There is a very obvious Connexion between *Purity of Mind* and *Knowledge*, and they have a manifest Influence upon each other. Purity of Taste prepares the Mind for receiving and delighting in the Knowledge of the Truth. And the Knowledge of the Truth greatly contributes to Purity of Taste. A pure Mind is a proper Habitation for Truth. And indwelling Truth, cannot fail of purifying the Mind. But when we speak of Knowledge as a part of our Resemblance to God ; we must consider that *God's Understanding is infinite*. How faint then the Resemblance that any

any Creature can, in this respect, bear to him ! How narrow the Mind of the highest *Angel*, when compared to *Divinity* ! How much less considerable, the Knowledge of the most perfect, much less still, of the lower Multitudes of Mankind, in this amazing Comparison ! Yet even in such low Degrees of Knowledge, how much Pleasure ! Turn to any kind of Science, even that which seems to be most insignificant, and in its own Nature, the least entertaining ; yet how much do those that are distinguish'd by it, value themselves and rejoyce in the Possession ! And if Knowledge that has so little Entertainment in it, is yet so pleasing to them that have it ; how much more must that be, which is of the most sublime, and therefore of the most entertaining Kind ! Minds so enriched, have quite *different Sentiments*, and seem to live and act in a very *different Sphere* from others. They have more refined Pleasures and in a richer Abundance. But indeed all that Mortals can know is but little. The present, does not seem to be a State, fitted for our attaining much Knowledge. Our Powers are narrow. We are all our Lives, confin'd to this little Globe. Our Lives are short. Our necessary Avocations many, and the greater part of Mankind have little or no Opportunity. It seems rather to be the great Business of this Life, to cultivate the *good Affections*. This is what Reason, what our Bibles principally aim at. Here our industrious Application will be attended with great and sure Success.

BUT tho' Knowledge does not seem to have been intended for our *principal* Pursuit upon Earth, yet we may taste so much of it as to convince us, that 'tis a most pleasing Endowment, and necessary to the compleat Happiness of Mankind. 'Tis the
proper

proper Happiness of intelligent Beings. Can't we readily name a great many things at present veiled from us, that it would be exquisite Pleasure to know thoroughly. How delightful then that State where *we shall know even as we are known!* Almost every thing is now a Mystery to us, there we hope to find, at least many things, clear and plain. The material and intellectual Worlds lying equally open. The past Works of God explain'd, and his glorious Designs unfolded in another manner than they are now. And in such Vastness of Matter for our Contemplation, what a pleasing, what inconceivable Progress, will Eternity of Existence, allow us to make! An Eternity in which we hope our Minds will be enlarged, our Faculties prompt, Memories sufficiently retentive; nothing to obstruct our Enquiries, and in which we expect to find the noblest Teachers.

WE can name some distinguish'd Characters in the present Age, we can name many in the past, that have appeared in the World, as of a superior Order, and sent into it, for the Instruction and Entertainment of Mankind. What a Profusion of Respect is paid by all Men of Taste to such Characters and Memories! What a pleasing Sense must they themselves, be suppos'd to have of their advanced Knowledge, and the Benefit that has accrue'd to their *Species!* And does it not give us great Pleasure to imagine, that in the Heav'nly World the Crouds of Mankind, shall be able not only to equal, but probably very much to excel all such Attainments. That the highest Advances in Science made in our World, shall be look'd down upon by every Learner in the Heav'nly One. There we may reasonably believe, all have Opportunity, all have Faculties, all have Taste. Knowledge is attained

rained without Labour and Toil. And, which is still more considerable, Men shall be free from all those Weaknesses and Prejudices, which in the present State of Things, so often betray them into Error. What Proficiency may not be hop'd, with such Advantages?

AN attentive Reader is very much surpriz'd, with the sublime Things that are found in the Writings of some Great Men, especially in the sacred Writings. How are we affected, when *Moses* with so much *Majesty* and *Simplicity*, describes the Generation of a Universe! When *David* sings the Praises of his God and Saviour! When *Solomon* lays open to us, the inmost of our own Natures! When *Isaiab* paints the Glories of *Zion* and her Redeemer! When *Paul* and *John* carry us into the deep Mysteries of Grace and Love! But are they not inspir'd now, do they not know, could they not teach in another Manner? And those great Men, of several Ages, that have spent their Time in *philosophical Enquiries*, how much more do they know now, and what different Lectures could they read? And shall we not in due time learn all this? Would it be Heav'n, if we could not? Let us for a little leave this *low World* of ours, its restless Labours and poor Entertainments, and think what they are doing above, where primeval Light and Truth have filled every Soul. How generous and liberal their Sentiments! How elevated and noble their Devotion! How rich and finish'd their Entertainments. And supposing, they retain the *Genius* they had upon Earth (as it is most probable they do) how far and deep have the philosophical Enquiries of *Solomon* reach'd! How full is *Paul* of the Counsels and Contrivances of Divine Wisdom and Grace! And what a Spirit must the *Beloved Disciple* breath, who seems

seems even upon Earth to act the *Seraph* in the Sublimeness of his Thoughts, as well as the Ardors of his Love. I own they that can think of an Eternity of encreasing Knowledge, without *Emotion*, must be sunk very low, and are the Reproaches of our Nature. They seem to be void of Mind, that have no Taste of the chief Pleasures of it. Blessed World ! where the admirable Powers and Faculties of Mind, unclogg'd by Flesh, shall have Opportunity of exerting themselves to the utmost, and be capable of Progress, that probably knows no End. Our Hopes of this State are the only effectual Remedy for the Anxiety we now feel, on account of the Loss of our Time, the Narrowness of our Minds, the Unfaithfulness of our Memories, and a thousand things of that Kind, Eternity will make amends for all.

BUT while our Imaginations are entertaining us with the infinite Variety of Objects, that will lie open to our Enquiries in the other World ; the high Advances in Knowledge we may hope to make, and the Delight that shall attend them : The *Intuition* of God himself above all Things raises our Expectation. *Now we see through a Glass darkly, then we shall see, Face to Face. Now we know in part, then shall we know as also we are known. Now we are absent from the Lord, then we shall be present with, and see him as he is.* Who can fully explain the Meaning of these strong Expressions ? Who amongst Mortals, can tell what it is to *see* God ? Here our Minds tho' biggest with Hope, are struck with religious Awe ; and forbid Imagination to use those Liberties, that may be safely taken with other things. This however we are certain of, that of all the Objects of our Knowledge God is infinitely the most Excellent and Glorious, and that our Contempla-
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tions of his Being and Perfections, are the most delightful. We find it so, even when we *see through a Glass darkly*. But oh ! the pleasing Astonishment, when God shall be seen *as he is*. When the Mind has free Access to his incomprehensible Glories. When it shall be *full of God*. This is Knowledge in its noblest Perfection, and must yield the most sincere Pleasure. Whatever Delight, infinite Greatness and infinite Beauty can give, must be here enjoy'd to the full. But indeed to attempt any particular Description of this, wou'd be only to *sully* the Subject, instead of explaining it, and to *darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge*. To these Thoughts concerning the Improvement of our Understandings in the other World, the very *Frame and Powers* of our Minds, as well as several Hints given us in the sacred Scriptures, seem to direct us ; and if some things that have been said shou'd, upon Examination, be found only conjectural, and without any Certainty ; yet I hope nothing will be found absurd, and inconsistent with the Principles of Reason or Religion.

BUT however Knowledge may be valu'd, yet there is something still more valuable, and without which Knowledge, even the most perfect, (if it were supposable that such Knowledge could be without it) would give but small Content, and that is *Love*. *God is Love* as well as Light. And his Children bear his Image in *Benevolence* as well as Knowledge. Love is indeed the noblest part of the Resemblance. All the moral Perfections of the Divine Being may be reduced to *Goodness* or *Love*. His *Justice*, his *Faithfulness*, his *Mercy to the wretched*, his *Delight in the good and happy*, are only different Denominations of the same thing, as acting towards different Objects, and in different Relations. And

so all the moral social Virtues, may be summ'd up in Love, which is the *fulfilling of the Law*. In this does our Likeness to God principally consist. *Be you Followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love*, Eph. v. 1. And as perfect Knowledge in the Heav'nly World conduces greatly to the Happiness of the blest Inhabitants, *in many respects*, so especially *in this*, that they will be *perfectly sensible* of all *moral Obligations*, and under the Influences of Truth, and vital Light possessing their Minds, invariably determin'd, to act according to them. When they know perfectly, they will perfectly love. When Mens Minds are purified from every Prejudice and see clearly, they will then be capable of thinking and acting, towards the Objects about them, according to their *real Nature*. And so will admire and love what is excellent and amiable, and *most* admire and love what is *most* so. In such a State of the Mind with what Wonder and Love, will Men converse with the Divine Being? When infinite Excellency and Grace are seen in a proper Light, how will the Spirit be attracted? With what Force will the natural Tendency of it, to what is great and lovely, exert itself? Again, how will Men in this State adore and love him *that was dead and is alive again*; the *Lamb* so divinely glorious, so nearly related to them, and to whom they owe so much? How pleased will such a Mind be in *Crouds* of Angels and perfected Saints, where all is Love: where there is nothing *soure*, nothing *jealous*, nothing *Offensive*, nor ever can be.

LOVE is the great Source of Delight, and without which we can have no Pleasure in any thing. This we learn from Experience, and that our Delight in any Object is always *in Proportion* to the Love we bear to it. And if so, with what Pleasure shall

shall we enjoy the Societies above? Especially, how great must the Delight be, in a State where the Mind is constantly tending to the most excellent of all Objects, with the greatest possible Fervour? Who can tell to what Extracies of Joy, this will carry Men? Such Love is perfectly rational, and therefore as lasting, as fervent. It's a Love, the Exercise of which nothing can happen, that shall interrupt. And it will always meet with the most gracious Returns. The Pleasure therefore that springs from it, as it is exquisite, must be most sincere and permanent. And while it fills the Mind with Joy and Satisfaction, will at the same time more and more assimilate it to the glorious Object. To come to a Conclusion of this Head of Discourse, in Knowledge, Purity, and Benevolence, the Resemblance of God may be supposed chiefly to consist. And you see how these tend to make us happy. I may add that when we are like God, in them, we shall have the noblest *Largeness* and *Freedom* of Spirit, most pleasing *Self-approbation*, find ourselves raised to an *Independence* on all low and gross Delights, exalted to the *very Perfection* of our Natures, and be at *eternal Rest*.

I SHALL in the last Place endeavour to explain to you the Apostle's Reasoning, *When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*. These Words are capable of two Senses. Either they signify, that the Vision of God supposes that we are already made like him, as a Preparation for our seeing him. Or they mean, that this Vision is the Cause of our being made more perfectly like him. Both these are true. Our Assimilation to God *in some measure* is necessary to prepare us for the Vision of him. Impurity cannot stand in his Presence. Nor have the unholy Eyes to see him,

they cannot discern his Excellency, nor are they capable of *delighting in God*. And so the Apostle might very justly argue that if the Servants of God, are to see him as he is, they must be assimilated to him, as a necessary Preparation for it.

BUT many think the other is the true Meaning of the Words, *viz. That the Vision of God is the Cause of our becoming more perfectly like him*. His Servants bear his Image, in some measure in this Life. But no doubt the Perfection of Holiness to which they shall attain hereafter, is in Degree much above any Progress they can make upon Earth. And there is Reason to ascribe this to the Vision of God, as the Cause of it. That Vision is no doubt of a *transforming Power and Influence*. For illustrating this, consider what is meant by *seeing God*. Surely, tho' we cannot particularly describe or explain this, (which as I already observed nothing but Experience can do) we may venture to say, that it does not mean, principally, the Vision of any external Glory or Majesty, which has but little relation to Mind. And that it rather signifies a *just Discernment of Divine Excellency and Grace*. A Discernment of that in which *Divinity* does truly consist. And must not clear and unprejudic'd Views of this, have a mighty Influence upon the Mind. What is the great, immediate, Cause of any Man's Conversion in the present State, from a sinful Course of Life, to true Holiness? Is it not the opening the Eyes of the Mind, to see the Beauty and Advantages of it? And the more Men see of this, are they not the more firmly attach'd to Religion? And if we had perfect Views of this, and things appearing always in the same perfect Light, must we not be perfectly holy? Now if our seeing God as he is, means amongst other things, our seeing Wisdom, Righteousness, Purity

Purity and Benevolence in the *highest* possible Perfection and Glory. Must not this have great Influence? Can we see them without *admiring and loving*? Can we so admire and love without *becoming like*? Is not this *the very Frame of our Nature*, that we (even insensibly often) imitate any Character we admire? And does it not explain the Influence of Vision, in assimilating the Mind, to an Object, infinitely more to be admired, than all others. The more Men see of God in this Life, the more like him they become. But in truth the Views we have of him now, are comparatively, very obscure and imperfect. And therefore can have no such Influence, as the immediate Intuition of the Divine Presence. They that are prepar'd for *that*, shall see God as he is: See him in a manner they never saw him *before*, admire, and feel the attractive Power of Divine Excellency and Grace as they never felt it *before*, and so their Assimilation to God shall be proportionably more glorious. It will be easy for the attentive Reader to apply what has been said in general, of the transforming Power of the beatific Vision, to those Particulars in which the Likeness of God has been shewn to consist; and to see how it tends to perfect Men in sacred Knowledge and Wisdom, in Purity and holy Love. So I shall not farther insist on this:

BUT by way of Improvement of the Subject, recommend it to your serious Notice, that the Persons intitled to this Honour and Happiness, are the Sons of God. Persons who in some measure are Partakers of a Divine Nature; who are born again, and by the transforming Powers of the Gospel and Spirit of Christ, have become new Creatures. They see the Deformity and Danger of moral Evil, hate, and endeavour with constant Care to avoid, and abstain

tain from it. They mourn for the Transgressions into which they have been at any time betray'd, and the moral Infirmities of their Minds, with sincere Grief. They cordially love Virtue and Goodness. And desire nothing so much as a State of perfect Innocence and Holiness. They set themselves with Diligence to the Performance of their Duty, without Exception to any of the Laws of God. They are mortified to this World, and choose the Blessings of the Gospel-Covenant as their Inheritance. By the Love of God and Mankind, they are formed for the Exercises and Entertainments of the Heavenly World. And humbly rely upon the Mercy of God, through the Redeemer for their Admission into it. These are the Characters of the Sons of God, and it may be of much Use to us, to compare our present State and Temper with them; that we may judge what our future State is like to be.

LET me likewise recommend to your Thoughts, the Reflection this inspired Writer makes, in the Verse immediately following my Text. *Every one that has this Hope purifies himself even as he is pure.* Our Hope of the beatific Vision has a manifest Tendency to purify our Hearts and Lives. For Hope plainly Implies *Desire*. A Desire proportionable, to the Excellency and Importance of the Good hoped for. And where there is Desire, there must be *Taste* for the Good desired. And where that Taste prevails, *contrary Inclinations* cannot have place. So that this Hope in its own Nature, tends to suppress every impure Disposition. And therefore Holiness is the certain Effect of it.

FARTHER, as Purity is the natural Fruit of this Hope, so indeed 'tis the *necessary Foundation* for it. *The pure in Heart shall see God.* No others are capable of the Vision. And the more we are distinguish'd

tinguish'd by moral Purity, the more just and assured our Hopes will be. And thus the Hope of seeing God and Purity of Life, have an admirable, mutual Influence, in strengthening and confirming each other. The more enlarged and comfortable our Hopes, the purer shall our Affections and Lives be ; and the purer our Affections and Lives, the larger and more comfortable our Hopes. So let the Servants of the Redeemer go on, in purifying themselves more and more, supported and encouraged by the pleasing Consolations of Hope ; till that shall be lost, and their Purity perfected, in the Vision of God.

LASTLY, I have in this Discourse laid before you, what is the proper Consolation of Christians, mourning over the *Corpses* and *Graves* of their deceased Friends. *They are not to sorrow as Persons that have no Hope. For if they believe that Christ died and rose again, they have Reason also to believe, that them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with him.* Our Friends that *die in the Lord*, are not lost to the great Purposes of their God and Redeemer. They are not lost to the intelligent Creation. They are not lost to themselves. On the contrary go into a State, in which they attain to a higher Perfection of their Powers and Faculties, and are capable of nobler Exercises and Felicity, than could be hop'd on Earth. *They depart that they may be with Christ, which is far better for them than to continue in the Body.* And at the great Day of Christ's Appearance, having received their Bodies from the Grave, spiritual and incorruptible, they shall joyfully assist in the Triumphs of their Lord, and thenceforth, for ever, live with him, in the most perfect State.

WE have Reason to hope this concerning your Late Pastor, Mr. HUGH SCOT ; whose removal
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from our World, causes to you, and to many others, most sensible Grief. A Man whom upon the least Acquaintance, one could not but like ; and who the longer and more intimately he was known, was the more loved and esteemed.

HE was happy in a very uncommon Sweetness of Temper, in which there was an Evenness and Constancy, that made his Friends sure of finding him, just what they left him. He had much Modesty, attended with all that *innocent Compliance* with the Temper and Way of others, that is so necessary to render Society agreeable. His Behaviour was easy and free, yet circumspect and exact. His Conversation tho' chearful, very remote from culpable Levity and Impertinence. He was a Person of a candid Spirit, and friendly Dispositions. Never severe in his Remarks upon Mens Weaknesses, nor unwilling to do Justice to their Virtues. Manifesting in all his Conversation, a great Regard to Justice and Truth, and a very benevolent Temper. There was remarkable Discretion in his Conduct, which spoke not only a good Judgment, but a greater Knowledge of the World than cou'd well have been expected in one of his Years.

HIS Life, which is great Happiness, was free from Blame, few have come through the dangerous Years of Childhood and Youth so unspotted, and made their first Appearances in the World with better Hopes.

HE seemed to have true Sentiments, and Impressions of Religion upon his Mind ; which appear'd in a careful Abstinence from all Appearance of Evil, a great Deference to the Will of God, and a firm Trust in him.

CONSIDER'D as a Scholar, he had a good *Genius* ; a clear and correct way of thinking ; and was as
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much acquainted with the more useful Parts of that kind of Literature, that suited his Station and Character, as could be expected from one of his Standing.

HE understood the Principles of *natural Religion*, and of *Christianity* very well. He had a thorough Knowledge of the *Evidences* by which the Christian Religion is proved to be of *Divine Institution*. And seem'd to have very just Sentiments concerning the *great Design* of it, viz. to raise Human Nature from its Decays and Ruins ; to restore it to its proper Perfection in holy Light and Love ; and to the Happiness that must result from them, which is the greatest such a Nature can enjoy.—Concerning the *Mediation of Christ* as the noblest Means of serving this End, and of reconciling and bringing us near to God.—Concerning the *Tendency* of the other *peculiar Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity*, to promote true Worth and Goodness, and to prepare Men for Heav'n. Judging of the *Importance* of them by *this Tendency*, and the manifest Influence of them, in producing vital Holiness, and Love.

HE chose it as his Business in Life, to *teach* this Religion ; and engaged in it with great Advantage, from the Integrity of his former Life, and the Endowments of Mind, wherewith it pleased God to favour him. His Sermons were easy and correct. His Style polite, and his Delivery engaging. He had the Faculty of joining Strength of Argument, with a very persuasive Manner and graceful Address. His publick Performances, all acknowledge, were never mean, and often exceeded the Expectation of his Friends. They were generally upon Subjects of the greatest Importance to practical Religion, and therefore the best fitted to edify the Hearers, while they shew'd at the same time the Seriousness of his

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own Spirit. It is not to be wonder'd at, that a Person of such Endowments, and whom Providence had so much countenanc'd, should quickly acquire a considerable Reputation. He was esteem'd much by the best Judges. And had the Happiness to be spoke well of by all *till very lately*. You know the Turn * in his Life, that gave Occasion to the using some unjust Freedom with his Character. This he bore with *Silence*. And so his Friends *well may*, now that himself is gone. But I hope Men that think deliberately, however formerly prejudic'd, will upon the Part he acted, make this just Reflection, *viz.* That the Side he took, is not so bad, but that a Man of sound Judgment, and unblemish'd Integrity, may think it his Duty to be of it. What he did, was not done rashly, but with great Deliberation. It was apparent from his Circumstances, and I think, all confess, it could not be owing to temporal Motives; and himself testified, it was with the perfect Approbation of his own Conscience; which as severals know, he enjoy'd to the last. Is it not natural to hope, that such an Event, may help to beget Charity, to some, that have been long suspected, and evil spoken of?

BUT, *let no Man glory in Men.* He came forth, indeed *as a Flower*; a very beautiful one, but *is cut down*: rather worn out, by a Distemper very lingering and extremely painful. In the bearing of which, and some Methods used for his Recovery, which

* As this Sermon may perhaps fall into the Hands of some, who will not understand what is meant by this; it may be fit to let the Reader know, that Mr. SCOT left the synodical Association, in which Subscription to the *Westminster*-Confession is required as a Term of Ministerial Communion; and join'd himself to the Presbytery of *Antrim*, who are in Principle against the imposing of any such Subscription.

are generally accounted shocking, he discover'd most magnanimous Resolution and Patience. No Complaint was heard from him ; save that exquisite Pain, in the last Stages of his Disorder, forced him to moan. But even then, never a Word unworthy of a Christian. In the Intervals of his Pain, when he was capable of conversing with his Friends, he discover'd the same easy and satisfy'd Spirit, the same obliging Temper, and the same Smile sat upon his Countenance, that us'd to recommend him in his best Days. In those Intervals, he express'd the *utmost Deference* to the Wisdom and Will of God, great Submission to his Providence, and Trust in his Goodness. With much Modesty expressing his Hopes, that if it should please God to remove him by Death, it would be well with him. In many Conversations with him upon this Subject, I found this the Disposition of his Mind. At last the Relief he often pray'd for came. The *Great Command* was giv'n, that disentangled him from Body and Pain, at once.

You in this Society, had but a Taste of those Ministrations, from which you hop'd so much Pleasure and Advantage. His Death is a very grievous Stroke to you, and to the Association of Ministers, under whose Care you are. The Providence of God has of late afflicted us very much. 'Tis but a few Months since we lost a Member that was accounted by many, an Ornament, not to us only, but to human Nature. And now another of very considerable Hopes, cut off in the Morning of Life and Usefulness. I heartily pray that all concern'd may make a proper Improvement of these afflicting Events. In the mean time, let none *charge God foolishly*. *Clouds and Darkness*, may be round about him, yet *Judgment and Justice are the Habitation of his Throne*, *Mercy and Truth go before his Face*. It ought to be an in-

tested Principle with us, that *what God does*, is the *fittest* and *best*, that can be done. This is the great *Rest* of a believing Mind in all Events. And if we let it go, we can have no secure Enjoyment of ourselves, no stable Hope or Satisfaction in any thing. Let us always think well of *Divine Providence*, and instead of vainly attempting a particular Interpretation of the several afflicting Steps of it; let us consider them all as intended to quicken us in our Christian Course, and by the Exercise of true Repentance, and Holiness of Life, to bring us nearer to God. In such an Improvement of them, we cannot possibly err. For we shall answer the great Design of them. And if we do so, we shall be safe, and may be easy, tho' we cannot penetrate into the particular Reasons of the Divine Conduct, or the particular Purposes that are to be served, by the Events that come to pass.

WHATEVER Losses we have of late sustained, let us still believe, that God knows how to serve his own Designs, and carry on his Work. He can find fit Instruments for it. Let us endeavour to do our Duty, and leave all Issues and Events to him, to whom the determining of them does of right belong.

LET me particularly, recommend to you, my Brethren, a *Conversation that becomes the Gospel*: *Peace among yourselves*: And Unanimity in your future Counsels; with fervent Pray'r to God, that you may be directed to the Choice of a Pastor, that shall feed you with *Knowledge and Discretion*: and rightly divide to you the *Word of Truth*.

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